— The tariff for internet access has been recently reduced. DTS has recently offered 20% concession on rental for leased lines taken and used for internet applications. Students are being given one time concession on internet accounts by DTS. Access to internet on local call basis from the nearest internet node has been provided throughout the country except in Andaman and Nicobar Island and Leh (J&K). The existing departmental Public Call Operators (PCO) and Subscriber Trunk Dialing (STD) booths are proposed to be upgraded to public tele-info/cyber centres. These centres will provide multi-utility services such as internet, email access and internet libraries.

(c) The approximate investment of the Government in IT infrastructure covering inter alia Department of Telecommunications Service (DTS), National Informatic Centre (NIC) Software Technolgy Parks of India (STPI), National Information Infrastructure (NII) of Ministry of Information Technology, Human Resource Development (HRD) of Ministry of Information Technology and Education and Research Network (ERNET) in the year 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 are as follows:

1999-2000-Rs. 250 crores

2000-2001-Rs. 530 crores

There is no plan to open new Regional Engineering Colleges at present.

Unveiling of New Millennium IT Policy by Karnataka

3592. SHRI K.C. KONDAIAH: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Karnataka Government has unveiled its new millennium inforamtion Technology policy;

(b) if so, the amount proposed to be raised through "Mahiti bonds' by the Karnataka Government; and

(c) the amount proposed to be provided by Government to implement the new IT Policy by the State Government?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) The Government of Karnataka have information that they unveiled the Millenium IT Policy on 18.3.200.

(b) According to the Government of Karnataka they propose to raise Rs. 300 crores by floating Mahiti Bonds.

(c) No such proposal is under consideration of the Government of India.

Agreement to Boost Singapore's Software Industry

3593. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether a high level delegation headed by him visited Singapore recently, and signed an agreement between the two countries to boost Singapore's software industry;

(b) if so, the details of discussion/outcome thereof;

(c) whether South-East Asia's larget exhibition/communications and IT event ""Communic Asia 2000" likely to be held in June, 2000 in Singapore; and

(d) if so, how many Indian Companies will be participating in this unique exhibition and likely benefits to India's growth in IT, expected therefrom?

THE MINISTER OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) and (b) A high level delegation led by Minister of Information Technology visited Singapore during the period 28th March, 2000 to 31st March, 2000. the following areas have been agreed for cooperation in the area of communication and Information Technology:—

i. Electronics Commerce
ii. Information Security
iii. Electronic Governance
iv. Human Resource Development
v. Research, Design and Development
vi. Exploring third country markets particularly of South-East Asian countries.

In this context, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Governemnt of India and the Government of Singapore was signed to set up a Task Force in Information Technology for the purpose of strengthening bilateral cooperation in various areas of Information Technology.